

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8945

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 4511

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, JO, SA, US

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

REF: (A) STATE 215212, (B) JIDDA 5915

1. I INFORMED KING HUSSEIN ON AUGUST 31 PER INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL A, THAT USG HAS NOW RECEIVED WRITTEN REPLY FROM SAUDI ARABIA AGREEING TO FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WE PROPOSED FOR FUNDING THE FULL \$540 MILLION JORDANIAN AIR DEFENSE PROGRAM. KING LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AND CONFIRMED THE \$540 MILLION FIGURE, TO BE SURE HE HAD IT CORRECTLY BUT DID NOT PROBE FOR FURTHER DETAILS. KING WAS OBVIOUSLY HAPPY AND RELIEVED TO HEAR THIS NEWS AND EXPRESSED TO ME HIS APPRECIATION.

2. KING HUSSEIN VOLUNTEERED HE WOULD WISH TO INFORM HIS SENIOR ARMY PERSONNEL BY ISSUING A CIRCULAR TO THEM. HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD WISH TO INFORM THE SOVIETS OF HIS TURNDOWN OF THEIR AIR DEFENSE OFFER, SINCE HE HAD BEEN HOLDING HIS DRAFT REPLY TO THEM FOR SOME TIME.

3. IN REPLY I INDICATED THAT DEPARTMENT HAD INSTRUCTED ME TO SAY THAT GIVEN THE LONG AND TORTURED HISTORY CONCERNING SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, WE THOUGHT IT ADVISABLE FOR JORDAN TO CONSULT WITH THE SAUDIS BEFORE MAKING ANY ANNOUNCEMENT THAT WOULD TEND TO GIVE PUBLIC EXPOSURE TO THIS ISSUE.

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KING INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD THIS POINT AND SAID THAT

HE WOULD HAVE CHIEF OF ROYAL DIWAN (ABDUL HAMID SHARAF) CONSULT WITH SAUDIS DURING TRIP THERE TOMORROW. KING SAID THAT SHARAF WAS ALREADY GOING TO MAKE THE TRIP TO SAUDI ABABIA TOMORROW TO DISCUSS OTHER MATTERS BUT THAT AIR DEFENSE QUESTION WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL ITEM THAT HE WOULD ADD TO HIS AGENDA. KING ASSURED ME THAT HE WOULD HANDLE APPROACH TO SAUDIS, IN THANKING THEM FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE, IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD PLEASE THE SAUDIS. HE DID INDICATE HOWEVER THAT HE DID NOT THINK THIS MATTER COULD REMAIN OUTSIDE THE PUBLIC DOMAIN FOR VERY LONG, PARTICULARLY ONCE THE SOVIETS ARE INFORMED. (FACT THAT KING RECEIVED ME IN JORDAN ARMED FORCES HEAD-QUARTERS AS IS SOMETIMES HIS CUSTOM WILL ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY SET JORDANIAN MILITARY RUMOR MILL BUZZING ON AIR DEFENSE ISSUE.)

4. I ALSO MENTIONED MY INSTRUCTIONS TO TELL HIM WE ARE MOVING FORWARD ON THE AIR DEFENSE PROGRAM. I INDICATED THAT MAP CHIEF COL MANN WOULD BE RETURNING TO AMMAN FROM CONSULTATIONS ON SEPTEMBER 5 AND THAT WE WOULD WANT TO WORK WITH JORDAN ARMED FORCES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON TRAINING PROGRAM AND OTHER ASPECTS OF AIR DEFENSE PROGRAM. KING REPLIED THAT SPEEDY EXECUTION OF THIS PROJECT IS UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND. KING REAFFIRMED HIS PLANS TO LEAVE ON SEPTEMBER 5 FOR 10 DAY TRIP TO ENGLAND AND TO PAY A ONE DAY VISIT TO ASAD IN SYRIA ON SEPTEMBER 2.

5. COMMENT: I ASSUME THAT KING'S COMMITMENT TO HAVE HIS ROYAL DIWAN CHIEF CONSULT WITH SAUDIS TOMORROW BEFORE INFORMING SOVIETS OR HIS TROOPS IS ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF REDUCING POSSIBILITY OF MISUNDERSTANDING ON THIS ISSUE. AS DEPARTMENT POINTED OUT, THE RESUMED RAYTHEON PRODUCTION ACTIVITY RISKS LEAKING THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT AND WE WOULD NOT WISH JORDANIANS TO BE IN POSITION OF BEING UNABLE TO SAY ANYTHING IF THERE IS SUCH A LIKELIHOOD INFO MIGHT LEAK IN U.S. IF DEPARTMENT DOES CONTEMPLATE MAKING ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IN COMING PERIOD ON THIS DEVELOPMENT, I WOULD APPRECIATE PRIOR NOTIFICATION HERE SO I CAN COORDINATE

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AHEAD OF TIME WITH THE PRIME MINISTER SINCE UNDOUBTEDLY THE GOJ WOULD ALSO WISH TO GET THIS GOOD NEWS TO THEIR PUBLIC. SINCE I DID NOT GET INTO DETAILS OF FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS OR OF PRODUCTION RESUMPTION, I WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE SUCH INFO (INCLUDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DRAWDOWN OF INITIAL PAYMENT FROM SAUDI FMS UNITED FUND) TO GOJ AT EARLIEST FEASIBLE OPPORTUNITY.

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